Multicultural Festival at Margarita Middle School in California

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On a cold night at the end of February, all of the students at Margarita Middle School in California attend a Multicultural Festival. Similar to what one experiences at Epcot in Disney World, the students walk around the world to various countries and learn about their customs, history and traditions. Some of the countries include Vietnam, Netherlands, Japan, Russia, Colombia, Egypt, Greece, India, Antarctica, Israel, Moldova, Mexico and Argentina. The students enter with an empty passport and by the end of the night their passports adorn stamps from over twenty countries.

A carefully decorated auditorium welcomes the students. Here they travel the world and learn about the many cultures that make up their community. At the first station, the Indian families teach the students about Indian food, dance, and clothing. They even decorate some young hands with henna tattoos. The Indian families in the community teach the young students about Hinduism, Indian history and literature. The students taste delicious Indian food, receive a stamp on their passport and then they travel to another country.

The Egyptian booth displayed a miniature sarcophagus, and the students learned about current events, including the overthrow of President Mubarak and the resulting political upheaval. The Israeli booth shared hummus and told the students how every Mediterranean country believes they created it; however, the Israeli mother mentioned that Israel consumes more hummus than all of the countries combined. One of the teachers shared about her experiences travelling to the South Pole. She showed photographs of the volcanically heated pools amidst the ice and snow. She showed pictures of penguins and seals, which are not afraid of humans; however, humans still need to be respectful and keep their distance.

The school’s goal of hosting this festivity was to “highlight diversity, tolerance and respect.” It was very successful and educational. This is something that the School District of Philadelphia could easily implement for its students. The students in my program, the Newcomer Learner Academy, are first year students in the United States. They have many stories to tell; many which are tragic. I have heard American students refer to my foreign students as “stupid.” This could be very beneficial for them to see that they are actually very intelligent, and their differences should be respected. The only remedy for ignorance is education, and a fun night like this could benefit all of the students in the district.

Works Cited

Smith, Jennifer. (March 5, 2011). Margarita Middle School Multicultural Festival. TemeculaPatch. Retrieved from http://temecula.patch.com